

The credibility of the United States is at stake. Our new preemptive war policy is incredibly dangerous and will result in many innocent lives lost until decisions for war are based on reality. Invading another country should be a very serious act. We did it. Our military performed well. But our President still needs to remain accountable to the United States citizens. Please ensure full disclosure is made on this matter.

By the way, this individual goes on to say, I am a Republican, but I still think that the Presidency must be accountable to people.

Another one from Pleasanton, California:

Leading America into its first war based on a preemptive strike doctrine and against strong international opposition was the most serious act President Bush has committed. Now there is serious doubt that his justification was honest. A democracy can only function if all of these suspicions can be examined and proven either correct or wrong. You can only keep America a democracy if you support the establishment of this commission.

Again, from Pleasanton, California:

Nothing could be less patriotic, more disregarding of the safety of our troops or more injurious to our national security than invading a country under false pretenses. If the Bush administration lied to us, we have a right, and a need, to know.

Pleasanton.

Here is one from Lodi, California:

Our involvement in Iraq has caused the region to become even more unstable. We owe it to ourselves and the world to investigate this matter and put every effort forth to unearth the truth. President Clinton was impeached for lying about sexual involvement with an aide. Evidence is coming to light that Bush and his administration have lied to the world and, to date, little is being done about it. I ask you, which infraction is more serious and warrants our time and money for investigation?

Again, Lodi, California.

Here is one from Tracy, California, Mr. Speaker:

The responsibility of sending young men and women into harm's way should not be taken lightly. It is to this end that I ask you to support a review of pre-war intelligence. I ask this as a former soldier and a member of the district of Tracy, California. I live on Central Avenue which runs through the downtown of Tracy and was lined with yellow banners embroidered with the names of our community's sons and daughters sent to fight in Iraq. You represent those men and woman, they wrote to their Member of Congress, and their families and, he said, you owe it to them and to us to investigate why exactly they are fighting this war. Yes, it is still a war.

Here is one from Thousand Oaks, California, in southern California:

Our country was taken to war with Iraq on the premise that we were under imminent threat by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Now, months later, after many deaths on both sides, we have yet to find any real evidence of these weapons that the administration had such "hard evidence" of. In order for the people's confidence in this administration to be restored, I am asking you to let us know the truth by endorsing an independent probe into this matter.

Here is one from San Diego:

If we continue to make war based on misinformation, we will regret it as we did in Vietnam. What is done is done in Iraq, but

we should be honest enough to look at the truth.

Now, here is another one from La Mesa, California, in southern California:

Our system is based on the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Once we feel that we are betrayed by our leaders and that they are not telling us the truth, the whole system might collapse. We paid millions of dollars to investigate the previous President because he lied about his private life. Therefore, it is worth our effort and money to investigate the current President and find out if he lied about taking our country to war. Certainly we need to know how the President used false evidence in his State of the Union speech to make his case for war. Please form an investigation committee and bring out the truth.

Here is one, Mr. Speaker, from Huntington Beach, California, again in southern California:

Isn't it time we got to the bottom of this embarrassment? It is obvious at this point that there were serious distortions given to the American people regarding the necessity for war with Iraq. As a matter of fact, it might be more important to look at why the distortions were necessary at all. Why was it so important to go to war with Iraq that lies had to be used? A lot of time, money, and lies have been spent on this charade and it seems, in due course, that the Bush administration should receive the same grilling that Tony Blair has gotten over the same issues.

Mr. Speaker, believe me, these individuals throughout the State of California believe that this is a matter of national security and national integrity to explore these questions. They want an independent commission to establish an investigation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that it is not in order to accuse the President of lying or stating intentional falsehoods, even by innuendo. Further, a Member may not read into the RECORD the remarks of others if those remarks would be out of order as spoken by the Member.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SOLIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

MR. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentlewoman from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

MANY REASONS TO QUESTION ACTIONS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, last night I could not sleep. Maybe it was the heat, or maybe I was just trying to make some sense of the situation we are in before Mr. Blair arrives in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Blair is in a lot of trouble at home, and Mr. Bush is in a little bit of trouble here.

There are many, many reasons to question our actions in Iraq, but, for some reason, there is a huge focus right now on the Niger uranium claim. So far, nothing the administration said about Saddam's gallons of nerve gas or smallpox or Anthrax or missiles or any other dangers we were supposed to be facing from Iraq have been found to be true. But until the last rock in Iraq has been turned over, the administration can say it is continuing to try hard to confirm the justifications for war it offered just a few months ago.

The uranium claim is different. I think that we are focusing on this claim because it was clear and concrete and seemingly supported by evidence and details. The President told us, "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

In retrospect, the administration figures have claimed that the President did not claim that Hussein was trying to buy uranium but only noted the British claim. Leaving aside how truly pathetic that kind of desperate parsing is, the statement was still false. The British government has learned no such thing. The "information" the British relied on came from one source, or perhaps two.

First, there were some crudely forged papers. ABC News has reported that the papers were created by an underpaid African diplomat who was stationed in Rome and sold to the Italian Secret Service which, in good NATOally fashion, passed the information on. We may know more about that soon, because the Italian judicial system opened an investigation into the matter earlier today.

The other source is perhaps the French. In early April The Washington Post noted that Western intelligence officials were fingering France as the country that circulated the fake papers.

Let us step back a moment from this who-did-what-to-whom and look at the actual claim. Was there anything believable about it? If the documents had been really top-notch forgeries instead

of laughable fakes, would the claim that Saddam Hussein was making a secret effort to acquire hundreds of tons of uranium oxide from Niger have been something to stake a life-and-death decision on?

Niger is a small country in West Africa, about the size of Rio de Janeiro in population. They have been mining uranium since 1970. There are two mines that produce uranium.

□ 2045

Both mines are run by an international consortium that includes Japanese, German, Spanish and French interests. Both mines are closely monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. There is nothing, nothing that could lead an objective observer to believe that Iraqi agents would slip into Niger, make a deal, and slip out again without somebody in the tiny expatriate community noticing and mentioning to Dr. El Baradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In fact, a distinguished retired American diplomat, Joe Wilson, spent more than a week in Niger sniffing around for any hint that the story might be true and found absolutely nothing.

It is simply not believable that this tiny, highly regulated industry in this tiny, sparsely populated country could have or would have violated IAE rules and broken U.N. sanctions to sell uranium oxide to Hussein. There are plenty of legitimate customers.

So why did the administration decide to believe it? Because of the overwhelming evidence? Hardly.

Last week Secretary of State Powell gave the following ringing defense to the President's claim: "There was sufficient evidence floating around at the time that such a statement was not totally outrageous."

Well, there you have it. It was obvious to anyone who looked into it carefully that Niger had neither the means nor the motive to sell uranium to Iraq. It was obvious. It was reported. And it was known. And yet the Secretary of State said, people of his stature thought it was not totally outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, actually it was totally outrageous. The President and the Congress are sworn to protect the United States of America. This is our most solemn duty. The question, and it is the only question that matters, is this: Did the threat posed by Saddam Hussein rise to the level of an imminent threat to national security or even to a grave and gathering danger? So far nothing leads to that conclusion.

There can be little argument about whether the people of Iraq are better off today than they were under Hussein. They are. But the 200 young Americans who have died and continue to die, one died last night, did not pledge their lives to make the people of Iraq better off. They pledged to protect the United States of America from real threats to our security. They died believing that they did. So far, I do not

know why they died. We should find out.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

SCHOOL READINESS ACT HURTS CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the so-called School Readiness Act of 2003, H.R. 2210. This bill does not provide the adequate funding for Head Start or for the much-needed expansion of early Head Start and migrant and seasonal Head Start programs.

H.R. 2210 begins an irreversible process of dismantling Head Start by promoting religious discrimination in hiring, shortchanging teachers, and denying services to eligible children by continuing to underfund Head Start.

Nearly 4 decades of research have established that Head Start delivers the intended services and improves the lives and development of the children and families that it serves. To illustrate how effective Head Start can be, let me tell you about one of my constituents.

Ms. Robles is a single mother with three children. She works full time while her children attend school. Pablo, the youngest of her three children, has been fortunate enough to participate and be enrolled in the Head Start program. Before Pablo started Head Start, he was quiet and withdrawn, a very shy boy who was very much dependent upon his mother. Pablo is now a confident and expressive little boy. He wants to do things independently and enjoys playing puzzles and building blocks.

Ms. Robles told me, "The transformation in Pablo is amazing. I see the difference in Pablo and my other two children who were not lucky enough to participate in Head Start."

In addition, Ms. Robles is grateful to Head Start because of the services it provides. She receives help from the social workers, including the emotional support she needed ever since leaving her family and friends behind in her country to make a new start in the United States. The nurses and teachers who participate in Head Start are also attentive and helpful to her and her children. Ms. Robles now feels she is a better mother to her children at home and a more prepared parent advocate to her children in school.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill that skimps on children, H.R. 2210. As the old saying goes, if it ain't broke, why fix it.

Let us not play with the future of our most vulnerable children like Pablo Robles.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

FUND MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GRIJALVA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the comments that my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), just finished. Today I would like to deal with one specific aspect of H.R. 2210 dealing with Head Start and that specific aspect has to do with an effort that this House must undertake to provide true relief to the impoverished children of migrant and seasonal farm working families.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs successfully provide the infants and children of migrants and seasonal workers in this country with educational and health related services. These services and these support services provided by Migrant and Seasonal Head Start keep children out of the fields where they are exposed to pesticides, hazardous equipment, extreme heat and other related health dangers.

Unfortunately, a severe funding shortfall leaves more than 80 percent of these eligible children without these vital services and protection.

According to the study published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Migrant and Seasonal